

## Guest Editorial

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

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Contact: Tom McCarthy, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

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### Career and Technical Education: Growing our economy

*A Career and Technical Education Month guest editorial*

*by State Superintendent Tony Evers*

Career and Technical Education (CTE) has been part of Wisconsin's public school educational offerings for more than a century and continues to enjoy strong support throughout the state. There are good reasons for this support. Wisconsin's economy depends on preparing students to be college and career ready, and CTE is instrumental in that goal.

CTE classrooms develop students' academic and technical skills through hands-on learning. Real-world applications help students gain experiences with teamwork, communications, and critical and creative thinking. CTE students have opportunities to participate in work-based learning activities as well, which foster career exploration and, many times, opportunities to apply skills in paid positions with industry mentors. Through Career and Technical Student Organizations associated with CTE programs, students develop, practice, and demonstrate leadership and technical skills that are measured against industry recognized standards.

Did you know that students who participate in CTE courses graduate at a notably higher rate than students who do not take CTE courses? Additionally, students who take a series of related CTE courses do even better. In part, it's because CTE helps students grasp why they need to know and excel in academic coursework. They use that knowledge as a foundation for technical careers in agriculture and natural resources, business and information technology, family and consumer science, health science, marketing, and technology and engineering.

While CTE is good for students, CTE programs also are helping to address the challenges of many Wisconsin employers to find skilled employees. CTE's success is built on partnerships with business and industry that strengthen school to work connections. Those partnerships ensure that programs adapt to meet current and emerging demands for a skilled workforce, helping to grow Wisconsin's economy. So during February's CTE month observance, let's celebrate the benefits of CTE for students, business and industry, and all of Wisconsin.

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**NOTES:** A high resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at [http://news.dpi.wi.gov/eis\\_vm-media](http://news.dpi.wi.gov/eis_vm-media). This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015\\_15.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_15.pdf).